

**CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT**

ENDC/PV.158
23 January 1964
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COLLECTION

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday 23 January 1964 at 10.30 a.m..

Chairman: Mr. L. SIMOVIC (Czechoslovakia)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. J. de CASTRO
Mr. E. HOSANNAH
Mr. J. LENGYEL

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. LUKANOV
Mr. G. GUELEV
Mr. D. TEHOV
Mr. V. IZMIRLIEV

Burma:

Mr. James BARRINGTON
U SAIN BWA
U MAUNG MAUNG GYI
U HTOON SHEIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. S.F. RAE
Mr. A.E. GOTLIEB
Mr. R.M. TAIT

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. L. SIMOVIC
Mr. M. ZEMLA
Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. Agate AGEDE
Mr. S. TEFERRA

India:

Mr. R.K. NEHRU
Mr. A.S. MEHTA
Mr. K. KRISHNA RAO
Mr. K. NARENDRANATH

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (Cont'd)

Italy:

Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. E. GUIDOTTI
Mr. S. AVETTA
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI

Mexico:

Mr. Ernest de SANTIAGO
Mr. Manuel TELLO
Miss Ofelia REYES-RETANA

Nigeria:

Mr. L.C.N. OBI

Poland:

Mr. M. NASZKOWSKI
Mr. M. BLUSZTAJN
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI
Mr. J. GOLDBLAT

Romania:

Mr. V. DUMITRESCU
Mr. E. GLASER
Mr. C. UNGUREANU
Mr. M. IONESCU

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL
Mr. P. HAMMARSKJOLD
Mr. C.G. EKLUND
J. PRAWITZ

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. S.K. TSARAPKIN
Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. I.G. USACHEV
Mr. V.V. SHUSTOV

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (Cont'd)

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. ISMAIL
Mr. AHMED OSMAN
Mr. M. KASSEM
Mr. S.E. IBRAHIM

United Kingdom:

Mr. Peter THOMAS
Sir Paul MASON
Mr. J.G. TAHOURDIN
Mr. A.J. WILLIAMS

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. A.L. RICHARDS
Mr. D.S. MACDONALD
Mr. R.A. MARTIN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

The CHAIRMAN (Czechoslovakia) (translation from Russian): I declare open the one hundred and fifty-eighth meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. NASZKOWSKI (Poland) (translation from French): I should like first to associate myself with the welcome extended to the representatives of Ethiopia, India, Mexico and Romania, who are attending our Conference for the first time, and at the same time to thank those who have welcomed me.

The Conference on Disarmament is resuming work after a recess of nearly five months. Nevertheless, the interval that has elapsed since our last meeting in August has not been a period of stagnation in efforts to strengthen and extend the international détente which began to take shape after the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty on a partial test ban (ENDC/100/Rev.1). Apart from its direct and positive results, the significance of the Moscow Treaty lies essentially in the fact that for the first time, despite the scepticism of those hostile to peaceful coexistence, it proved possible to conclude an agreement designed to slow down the armaments race, if only as a first step, by a ban on perfecting the most dangerous types of nuclear weapons.

At its eighteenth session the General Assembly of the United Nations rightly emphasized that the Moscow Treaty might be the first of a series of peace measures that would blaze the trail towards disarmament. The Polish delegation takes a similar view of the United Nations resolution calling upon States to refrain from placing in orbit around the earth nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which was submitted unanimously by our Committee and adopted by acclamation last October (ENDC/117; A/RES/1884(XVIII)), and of the resolution sponsored by Ethiopia and other non-aligned countries, calling for the signature of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons (ENDC/116; A/RES/1909 (XVIII)).

The atmosphere of wider understanding that prevailed at the General Assembly's last session, the disappearance of certain cold-war themes which had poisoned the atmosphere for years, and some of the resolutions adopted, bear witness that the spirit of peaceful coexistence and a desire on the part of States to settle all disputes by peaceful means are gaining ground among ever-widening circles throughout the world.

We have watched other events during the past few weeks which suggest that a further lessening of tension has taken place. The Soviet Government has taken important decisions about curtailing its military budget for 1964 (ENDC/123, p.3),

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and is considering the possibility of reducing its armed forces. President Johnson's declarations indicate that the United States Government is also contemplating a cut in its military expenditure. We should like to regard this step by the United States Government, President Johnson's statements, and his message to the Eighteen-Nation Committee (ENDC/120), as evidence of the will to pursue the policy of President Kennedy, a statesman who was able to look reality in the face and who understood that the most immediate problem of the present day was to find ways of lessening tension and preventing war, but whose activities were so tragically brought to an end.

Thus our present session cannot be viewed as a mere continuation of the previous one. We resume our work encouraged by the results of the United Nations General Assembly and by the unilateral pacific moves made by some States in an atmosphere of reduced tension between East and West.

Of course, conditions propitious to discussion and negotiation cannot by themselves assure success. Progress in disarmament negotiations depends on the elimination of political, economic and even emotional obstacles.

There is a growing awareness even in Western military circles, hitherto entrenched in their conservative positions, that the armaments race is an absurdity and that the proliferation of devices of mass destruction and the excessive increase in the "over-kill" potential can no longer be justified by reasonable men, because the weapons accumulated in our present arsenals are capable of reducing to ashes a large part of our planet. But this greater awareness is not enough. Proof must be given of the will to stop the fast-turning wheels of war production, so as to turn the spiral of armament into a spiral of disarmament.

Words must give way to deeds. I am bound to say that so far the Western Powers have not shown great eagerness to translate their declarations into action. The policy of creating faits accomplis in regard to armaments, and of undermining the few arrangements that have so far been concluded to relax tension, must be abandoned. We regard the persistent efforts to set up what is known as the multilateral nuclear force under NATO auspices as an example of moves that are at variance with the declarations that have been made and with the spirit of the Moscow Treaty. Whatever arguments are advanced in support of this move, there can be no doubt that the whole undertaking, if successful, will lead to nuclear weapons being placed first indirectly and then directly at the disposal of States which have not so far possessed

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them. We are not alone in thinking this. The plan for a multilateral nuclear force has been unfavourably received even in some NATO countries, and has been warmly welcomed only by those who are tireless in their efforts to obtain access to nuclear weapons and to secure a voice in the decision to use them.

The dissemination of nuclear weapons either by increasing the territory where they are stored or by placing them at the disposal of a larger number of countries cannot but increase the difficulties, already great enough, of achieving disarmament. It must be stated frankly that the making of nuclear weapons available to those forces which put forward territorial claims in Europe is bound to create serious additional political complications and postpone indefinitely the possibility of stabilizing the position in that area, so vital to the peaceful development of the world.

Military and political difficulties are not the only ones which must be overcome if the world is to cast off the heavy burden of armaments. We must not underestimate the opposition to all measures for lessening tension exercised by economic circles interested in the expansion of the armaments industry. Their violent reaction to the United States Government's announcement that certain military installations were to be dismantled was characteristic, even though those installations are few and strategically obsolete.

Nor is there any need to expatiate on the necessity of removing psychological obstacles caused by the distrust and suspicion accumulated during the long years of the cold war. It must be recognized that many forces tainted with this cold-war spirit continue to be very active and to exercise a significant influence in some Western countries.

A positive influence could be exercised in this direction by unilateral measures for slowing down the armaments race, undertaken as part of the policy of mutual example recently advocated by Premier Khrushchev (ENDC/118, p.5). Any step of this kind, whether in the form of a cut in military expenditure, a reduction in the armed forces, or their withdrawal from foreign territory, could provide proof of good will and peaceful intentions, a gesture which would impose upon the other side a moral obligation to reciprocate with equivalent measures. Of course, we must not delude ourselves into thinking that unilateral measures could lead to unilateral

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disarmement. Such measures do not, of course, possess the same binding force as treaty provisions, but they can bring about a climate of trust conducive to the conclusion of international agreements, in other words an atmosphere which will further our Committee's work.

In its resolution 1908 (XVIII) of 27 November 1963 (ENDC/116), the General Assembly called upon our Conference to "resume, with energy and determination, its negotiations", and recommended that the Committee "continue to encourage the widening of the areas of basic agreement or similarity in the principal parties' approaches to the fundamental issues of general and complete disarmament".

Wide possibilities of reaching accommodation are offered by the proposal made last September by the Soviet Union (A/PV.1208, provisional, p.71) concerning the retention by the Soviet Union and the United States of America of a strictly limited number of missiles of an agreed type together with nuclear war-heads until the end of the third stage; that is, until the end of the whole process of disarmament, and the establishment of control over those weapons at the beginning of the second stage.

The elaboration of agreements on partial measures aimed at lessening international tension, reducing the possibility of war breaking out, and facilitating general and complete disarmament, is another task which should go hand in hand, as it were, with the preparation of a treaty on disarmament. In this Committee we have already discussed various projects in this connexion during the past two years. The socialist countries have put forward a whole series of constructive proposals in this domain which have been favourably received by many governments, particularly those of the non-aligned members of the Committee, which since its inception have made great efforts to further agreement. We hope that at the present stage the Western Powers also will give proof of their desire to find common ground for negotiation based on mutual concessions.

Apart from our main duty of preparing a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament, we must take vigorous action on measures that are ripe for inclusion in an agreement. It would be disastrous if the Eighteen-Nation Committee, which is resuming its work in a better atmosphere than before, were to become bogged down again in interminable and fruitless discussions.

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That being so, we reaffirm our support for proposals to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in any form, whether direct or indirect, and for the creation of denuclearized zones in different parts of the world. In this connexion the Polish plan for creating a nuclear-free zone with limited armaments in central Europe is wholly relevant. We fully endorse the Polish memorandum on the establishment of a denuclearized zone in central Europe which Mr. Rapacki submitted to this Committee on 28 March 1962 (ENDC/C.1/1), and we are seeking at the same time to reconcile the different points of view in regard to more limited agreements which would be easier to conclude at the present time. These are the considerations underlying the five-point proposal made by Mr. Wladyslaw Gomulka on 28 December 1963 concerning measures aimed at lessening tension and the danger of war.

We also favour the proposals submitted on numerous occasions by the Soviet Union, and consider that its plan for a non-aggression pact between the two military blocs (ENDC/77), and its proposals for reducing troops stationed in foreign countries and cutting military budgets (ENDC/118, p.5), deserve special attention.

We listened with interest to the speech made by Mr. Foster, Chairman of the United States delegation, at our last meeting (ENDC/PV.157), and to President Johnson's message (ENDC/120). We await further details on the proposals submitted in outline by the United States before we can express an opinion on them.

To sum up, I should like once again to emphasize that the Polish Government is profoundly convinced that the time has come to move on decisively from the expression of pious hopes to action. I assure you that the Polish delegation will spare no effort to contribute to the work of our Conference, which the world expects to act.

Mr. BURNS (Canada): The Canadian delegation has a few comments on statements which we heard at our first meeting. We have listened with careful attention to what the representative of Poland has just been telling us, and we shall study his remarks and possibly have further comments in regard to them also. My delegation would like also to put before the Conference some views concerning what are the most important and useful subjects for us to work on during the next few weeks and months.

The Canadian delegation desires to pay a tribute --- as other delegations have done --- to the late President Kennedy, whose tragic death last November shocked the world. His loss has been universally deplored. His statements and the actions which followed them are landmarks on the long and difficult road to disarmament and peace. We here should be inspired by his memory as we undertake again our search for ways to disarmament, trying as best we can to carry forward the cause for which he did so much.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his message on the resumption of this Conference (ENDC/PV.157, pp. 5 et seq.). In this message he gives a résumé of the proceedings at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly relating to disarmament. We are grateful for his encouraging reference to the improved circumstances in which we resume our work here.

A most useful feature of the discussion of disarmament in New York is that it provides all Members of the United Nations not represented here with an opportunity to express their views about the progress of our negotiations. The debate demonstrated that the world community believes that this Committee is the most effective body for negotiating disarmament which can be set up under present circumstances. Other governments are following our work with the closest attention. At this point I should like to refer also, as the representative of Poland has done, to the paragraph in resolution 1908 (XVIII) which urges that decisive action should be taken towards the realization of our goal of complete disarmament (ENDC/116).

The Canadian delegation, like others that have spoken previously, has been greatly encouraged by President Johnson's message to this Conference (ENDC/120). He sets forth five different subjects on which we may be able to negotiate and make some progress towards agreement. Perhaps the most interesting of these is his suggestion that the United States, the Soviet Union and their allies on each side

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should consider a verified freeze of the number and characteristics of strategic nuclear offensive and defensive vehicles. We note that the characteristics of these vehicles are to be "frozen". Presumably this means that there would be a halt to the development of new -- and possibly more lethal -- types. A second point is that the "freeze" is to be verified. We foresee that the problem of verification may create some difficulties, as it has done in most other disarmament proposals, and we wait with interest for a fuller explanation of how it is to be done. But the idea, we think, is a valuable one. We have been talking here for a long time about stopping the arms race; here is a new and concrete suggestion about stopping it. Between the phase of building up armaments and the hoped-for phase of reducing armaments, there has to be a point of time at which you stop -- like changing the movement of a motor-car from forward to backward. This proposal seems to us to be in the same spirit as the decisions by the Soviet Union and the United States to reduce their military budgets.

In this connexion, we are also interested in the suggestion made by the representative of the United Kingdom that we should see whether it is possible to make a start with the physical destruction of weapons -- we would add particularly nuclear weapon vehicles. We would agree with the view that --

"This would be a real demonstration of our determination to turn the rising graph of armaments downwards." (ENDC/PV.157, p.23)

The Canadian delegation hopes that this Conference will also be able to consider means for the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes. The initiative for the examination of this very important matter came in the letter of Mr. Khrushchev dated 31 December, addressed to a large number of governments.

The reply of President Johnson has been circulated to the Conference by the United States delegation. We are particularly impressed by the sentence indicating his agreement with Chairman Khrushchev on --

"... the need to accompany efforts for disarmament with new efforts to remove the causes of friction and to improve the world's machinery for peacefully settling disputes." (ENDC/119, p.1)

The Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, the Honourable Paul Martin, in a statement before the United Nations General Assembly on 18 October 1963, pointed out:

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"as ... the major Powers of the world move forward towards ending the arms race and dependence on national armaments for the maintenance of their security, the more urgent becomes the need to develop the capacity of the United Nations to deal with situations which could threaten international peace". (A/C.1/PV.1313, pp.23-25)

The question of measures to strengthen the security of States is already on the agenda of this Conference (ENDC/52), and both the United States and the Soviet Union plans contain provisions covering the maintenance of peace and the settlement of disputes. My delegation hopes that at our present session we shall have an opportunity to consider this subject and that we shall be able to make some progress towards achieving common positions.

The third point in President Johnson's letter was that this Conference should negotiate on the cut-off of production of fissile material for weapon use -- presumably accompanied by reconversion to peaceful uses of some of the existing stocks, as has already been proposed by the United States. A new feature of President Johnson's proposal is the suggestion that both sides should close down plants for the production of this material, with mutual inspection, and his offer to accept appropriate international verification of the reactor shut-down which has already been scheduled in the United States. We note that the delegation of the United Kingdom also regards this as an important subject for negotiation.

President Johnson's fourth point is that the United States, in consultation with its allies, will be prepared to discuss proposals for creating a system of observation posts to reduce the danger of war by accident, miscalculation or surprise attack. We note that the representative of the Soviet Union listed that as one of the measures which his country proposed for negotiation. We note also that he believes that it ought to be linked with a reduction of foreign forces in German territories and some provisions for the limitation of nuclear armaments in certain areas. The Canadian delegation hopes that an effective negotiation on observation posts can soon be started, and we hope also to contribute to it.

The fifth point in President Johnson's letter was a proposal to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to nations not now controlling them. The desire of almost all nations to follow up the partial test ban with measures to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons was clearly reflected in the recent General Assembly

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debates, where almost every speaker urged that there should be an agreement to this effect. The Canadian delegation is convinced that this is an important subject that ought to be discussed here, and we hope that it will be possible to arrive at some agreement. In our view the basis of agreement should be the so-called Irish resolution on this subject -- General Assembly resolution 1665 (XVI).

The Canadian delegation hopes we shall make further progress towards agreement on a programme to bring about general and complete disarmament. Although to date it has been a slow and painful process, this Committee has succeeded in overcoming some differences in the plans of the two sides for general and complete disarmament. We must try to speed up this process. We could usefully work on a number of aspects of the programme for general disarmament, and I would mention now only two of them. We trust that we shall soon receive more information about the interesting change in the position of the Soviet Union on reducing and finally eliminating nuclear weapon vehicles which Mr. Gromyko announced at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly (A/PV.1208, provisional, p.71), and that during the present session we shall make some progress in working out a common approach to disarmament in this all-important field. We noted that Mr. Tsarapkin, the representative of the Soviet Union, said last Tuesday, after citing moves the Soviet Union had made to bring its position in certain sectors of disarmament closer to the Western position, that if the Western Powers would make the necessary efforts:

"... substantial progress could be achieved at this session of the Committee in preparing a treaty on general and complete disarmament." (ENDC/PV.157, p. 16)

The Canadian delegation indeed hopes that that will happen.

We could also devote attention to the limitation and reduction of military budgets. Mr. Tsarapkin's remarks in this connexion (ibid., pp. 13,14, 17) are encouraging. It may be found that agreement on some such measure could be implemented in advance of the programme of general disarmament. We have noted the reductions which have been made in the military budgets of the United States and of the Soviet Union. I might say that Canada also has reduced its military spending in some areas. It must be encouraging to us here to know that the great Powers are beginning to convert a portion of their national expenditures to more useful purposes than the preparation of undesired rides for all of us into outer space -- of course, in a highly volatilized condition!

(Mr. Burns, Canada)

We were glad to note that the establishment of nuclear-free zones was one of the measures which the representative of the Soviet Union thinks the Committee should work on during the present session. In our view the most promising approach would be to examine the conditions which should exist and the criteria which should be applied in working out agreements in nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world.

Resolution 1910 (XVIII) of the last session of the General Assembly calls upon this Conference to continue its negotiations to achieve "the objectives set forth in the preamble of the Treaty", that is, the Moscow Treaty: namely, "the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time" (ENDC/100/Rev.1). All of us here are well aware of the difficulties which prevented agreement on the cessation of underground nuclear tests. In the opinion of the Canadian delegation, this difference of view can only be resolved by a free and frank exchange of scientific information relating to the detectability of underground tests; and we hope that the nuclear Powers may be able to agree eventually on the setting up of such a scientific committee. We feel that it would add to the effectiveness of such a committee if representatives from non-aligned countries which have the necessary expertise could be included in it.

The Canadian delegation is happy that the co-Chairmen agreed on a programme of meetings, which was accepted by the Committee at our last meeting (ENDC/PV.157, p.38). This has systematized our work to the extent that the first meeting in the week will be devoted to general disarmament and the second to collateral measures. What we next need in order to get on with our job in the most effective manner is to have agendas both for general and complete disarmament and for collateral measures. The documents relating to both require considerable revision to correspond to the present needs of this Conference, and my delegation hopes that they can be recast in a way which will help us to concentrate our efforts. Secondly, we hope that during the coming session we shall have more informal discussion around this table instead of continuing to stuff the record with formal set speeches previously written -- a practice which we have all been following for too long. Finally, it would be most helpful if the co-Chairmen could agree upon subjects which could be referred to working groups for detailed technical discussion.

The CHAIRMAN (Czechoslovakia) (translation from Russian): Permit me to speak now in my capacity as representative of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Before making my statement, I should also like on behalf of the Czechoslovak delegation to associate myself with those who have already welcomed the new representatives of Ethiopia, India, Mexico and Romania and to welcome Mr. Mohammed Hafez Ismail, the new representative of the United Arab Republic. We all sincerely hope that their participation will contribute as greatly as possible to the work of our Committee.

The Czechoslovak delegation has listened with great attention to all the statements that have been made here so far. We note with satisfaction that a common feature of all these statements was the stress laid on the need to achieve progress at last in the disarmament negotiations. In this connexion, more or less optimistic hopes have been expressed regarding the prospects of the next stage of the Committee's work in view of the favourable atmosphere in which it is starting its activities. We share the view that the Committee is meeting in more favourable circumstances than ever before, owing to a definite improvement in international relations as a result of the signing of the Moscow Treaty and of other agreements achieved during the past year. I hope we are all agreed that we cannot content ourselves with these first steps and that it is essential to use this favourable atmosphere in order to achieve further agreements and measures for the relaxation of international tension and, in particular, for the reduction of the danger of nuclear war.

The stress which is being laid on the need to take effective measures in the field of disarmament is based on the realization of all the danger to mankind represented by the accumulation of vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery. It is gratifying that certain statesmen in the West - and here I have in mind the late President of the United States of America, Mr. Kennedy, and his realistic approach to relations between East and West, a policy which is being continued by President Johnson - I repeat that certain statesmen in the West are also beginning to recognize a fact which the socialist countries have been stressing for a number of years, namely, that war under modern conditions, with the use of missiles and thermonuclear weapons, in view of their unimaginable destructive power, would cease to be an instrument for achieving the aims of foreign policy or for settling disputes between States.

(The Chairman, Czechoslovakia)

This correct conclusion and the improvement of the atmosphere which is being fostered to a considerable extent both by the unilateral measures being taken by the Government of the Soviet Union and by the measures which are being prepared by the Government of the United States, create favourable pre-conditions for our negotiations. At the same time, however, they impose an obligation on us, since public opinion throughout the world expects our work to yield at last some practical results in the field of disarmament.

In these circumstances, there arises the urgent question of the direction in which the further work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee will develop and whether it will succeed in fulfilling the tasks entrusted to it. Nothing at all would be gained if we were to close our eyes to the fact that, despite a certain positive significance of the work done by the Committee, the results of our activities are as yet minimal.

In our opinion, a basic condition for achieving positive results is to increase the activity of the delegations of all member States in a common endeavour to reach agreement on individual questions and, first of all, on the basic problem, that is on general and complete disarmament. It is essential for all the participants in the negotiations to make a sincere effort to overcome differences of opinion, not to evade a business-like discussion of the important proposals of the other side, to try to meet each other halfway and, by seeking out the points of contact in the positions of the various States, to help to establish a basis for a mutually-acceptable agreement.

These are precisely the principles by which the delegations of the socialist countries have hitherto been guided in the negotiations. As the representative of the Soviet Union pointed out at our last meeting, the socialist countries, in their desire to achieve progress in the negotiations, have gone forward to meet the positions of the Western Powers on many questions and have introduced considerable changes into their original proposals (ENDC/PV.157, pp. 15 et seq.).

We expect that our Western partners will act likewise, that they will take the position of the other side into account and that they will try to help bring about acceptable solutions to individual problems. This may all the more be expected since at our first meeting Mr. Foster, the representative of the United States of America, quoted President Johnson as saying that the time for simply talking about peace had passed (ibid., p. 10).

(The Chairman, Czechoslovakia)

As regards the methods of our work, we continue to believe that, in order that the negotiations may lead to positive results, it is essential first of all to reach agreement in principle on each question. But I should like to stress that in principle we are not against expert and technical discussions. Such discussions, however, can have significance only at the stage when, on the basis of a political agreement in principle, it becomes necessary to work out a technical variant for its implementation, including control. In this connexion I should like to remind you of the lamentable experience of the long-drawn-out and fruitless technical discussions which took place in various commissions and sub-commissions of the League of Nations. From that experience, which we acquired at so much cost, we must draw the necessary conclusions in order to avoid repeating past mistakes. Therefore we are obliged to direct our efforts first and foremost towards reaching agreements in principle.

If all the delegations bend their efforts in that direction, the Committee will be able to make a positive contribution to the cause of consolidating the favourable development of international relations which began last year.

In all the statements we have heard so far it has been pointed out unanimously that the Committee's basic task should continue to be the achievement of an agreement on general and complete disarmament. This is fully in accordance with resolution 1908 (XVIII) (ENDC/116) of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which reaffirmed that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is the surest safeguard for world peace and the national security.

In considering this basic question, we should, in our opinion, concentrate our attention mainly on the new feature, namely the proposal, submitted by the USSR to the eighteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to retain the so-called "nuclear umbrella" until the end of the programme of general and complete disarmament (A/PV.1203, provisional, p.71).

As is well known, in the past the Western Powers insisted on guarantees of their security throughout the disarmament programme. They stressed that they wanted to have a feeling of security and to retain the right to possess nuclear weapons until the world was completely disarmed. The Soviet proposal gives them that security. We trust that the Western Powers will now adopt a clear position in regard to this very important Soviet proposal, which provides a new and important stimulus for our negotiations.

(The Chairman, Czechoslovakia)

A considerable contribution to the search for possibilities of achieving progress in the negotiations on general and complete disarmament would be an actual physical beginning of the process of disarmament, in particular, as proposed by the Government of the Soviet Union (ENDC/123), through a reduction of the numbers of armed forces and armaments. Another useful step would be the bilateral withdrawal or, at least, a reduction of the numbers of foreign armed forces located in the territories of other European countries. We believe that such action, which fully corresponds to the present situation, would help to bring about favourable conditions for achieving progress in the negotiations on general and complete disarmament.

We share the views which have been expressed here to the effect that considerable possibilities for reaching agreement exist in the field of so-called collateral measures, the implementation of which would contribute to a further relaxation of international tension. I refer to such measures as the reduction of military budgets, measures against any dissemination of nuclear weapons, measures for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, and effective measures against surprise attack.

In this connexion we attach particular importance to the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the Warsaw Treaty States and the NATO States. We consider that, in view of the commitment which the Western Powers assumed on this question in the communiqué of 25 July 1963 (ENDC/101) on the occasion of the Moscow negotiations, it would be desirable to begin without delay negotiations for an agreement which would satisfy all the interested parties.

The time is now ripe for the solution of all these problems. The implementation of the proposed measures would help to strengthen confidence in relations between States and would open the way to the establishment of a world without weapons and without wars.

The Czechoslovak delegation considers that in this field our work should be directed first and foremost towards measures which would yield immediate positive results, and the implementation of which would not come up against more substantial obstacles, for instance, in regard to their effect on the existing balance of forces or methods of control.

In conclusion, I should like, on behalf of the Czechoslovak delegation, to express my conviction that in its work the Committee will take the fullest possible advantage of the favourable conditions which now exist and that its activities will

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at last take a long-awaited turn for the better. I venture to assure you that the Czechoslovak delegation, in accordance with its Government's instructions, will do everything in its power to achieve this goal.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 158th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. L. Simovic, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, representative of Czechoslovakia.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Poland, Canada and Czechoslovakia.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Friday, 24 January 1964, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

